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Drama and history: Thomas Becket as portrayed by Eliot and Anouilh

Donna Faye Wenger
Lehigh University

DRAMA AND HISTORY: THOMAS BECKET AS PORTRAYED BY ELIOT AND ANOUILH

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Donna Faye Wenger

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James R. Frakes
Professor in charge

J. Burke Severs
Chairman of the Department

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Abstract

The story of Thomas Becket has long captivated men's imaginations: two dramatists, T. S. Eliot and Jean Anouilh, have utilized that history as a basis for dramas. Through Becket's story, Eliot and Anouilh present "indiscussable truths": for Eliot, it is that Becket is the epitome of Christian freedom which comes only through total submission to a Divine will; for Anouilh, it is that each man must determine his own salvation in an isolated universe.

The criterion for evaluating the success of the two dramatists is their degree of adherence to historical fact. If a dramatist chooses history as a subject for drama, he assumes a responsibility to preserve that history. By examining the facets of Becket's life as presented by Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral (1935) and Anouilh's Becket (1960), the degree of fidelity to history is observable.

Becket's life can be sectioned by his various activities: initially, he was a politician, Chancellor to Henry II; then, he was elevated to the position of Archbishop of Canterbury; finally, he suffered martyrdom and was subsequently canonized. Eliot chooses to concentrate on the approach to and moment of death as the fitting climax of Becket's life. Anouilh chooses to portray Becket's entire adulthood, from the youthful friend of Henry to the alienated Archbishop who was martyred.

Eliot is true to history; rather than alter history he condenses it, as he must to contain his selective subject. Anouilh forsakes historical fact to add to and alter Becket's history as it suit his purposes. As a dramatist treating historical material, Eliot succeeds where Anouilh fails.

Chapter I

The Historical Becket

Thomas Becket was undoubtedly one of the most fascinating figures of the Middle Ages, and the story of his life and martyrdom has held sway over the imagination of writers and poets for more than 800 years. This study is concerned with the retelling of this story in two notable plays, Murder in the Cathedral (1935) by T. S. Eliot, and Becket (1960) by Jean Anouilh, and with the differing literary treatments of an historical figure. Thomas Becket was so paradoxical a man, subject both to intense hatred and adoring veneration, that a summary of his life is necessary for evaluation of the effects of the two plays.

Thomas Becket was born on December 21, 1118, in Cheapside, London, to parents of Norman descent, Gilbert and Matilda Becket.[1] Many legends were to spring up around this proud man who was martyred, and his birth is not excepted. In attempts to explain the origins of Becket's magnetism, the medieval mind believed his mother to be a Saracen maiden who followed a crusading Christian knight, an escaped prisoner from her father, back to London, and there married him. The more sober biographers contented themselves with tales of Matilda's premonitions that within her womb she carried the whole church of Canterbury. It is not necessary to re-

peat all the legends of Becket's miraculous origins, for these few examples indicate the view medieval history held of such a man. What is known of Thomas Becket's background is that his father, once sheriff of London, was a man of means in twelfth-century London, and that by the time of his only son's birth, he was able to retire from active trade to live on the income of his rents.

Young Becket's early training was a mixture of secular and spiritual: he received the secular training away from home, but his mother gave him the spiritual guidance. Matilda Becket was unusually devout and may even have intended her son for the Church, a desire not so extraordinary in the twelfth century, when the Church was the most readily available means of social advancement. Sent to the priory of Merton in Surrey at the age of ten, young Becket began his formal education; very likely it was here that he acquired his relish for logic and argument, favorite pursuits of medieval scholars.

A significant step in Becket's education came when he was seventeen or eighteen: he had briefly attended a London school, after four of five years at Merton, and now he had a scholar's opportunity--he went to Paris to continue his studies. Paris had the most famous schools of the day, and any serious student welcomed the chance to travel there. The most noteworthy outcome of Becket's stay seems to have been

in an area other than his formal education:

> The contemporary biographers and the chroniclers all agree that Thomas Becket took a vow of chastity in early youth . . . We cannot penetrate into the motives for Thomas Becket's vow; we can only note that he seems to have kept it.[2]

As Richard Winston notes, a chastity vow would certainly have been tested in Paris, and yet Becket apparently passed the test.

Becket's stay in Paris lasted three or four years and, possibly because of his mother's death, he returned to England in 1140. For one year he pursued solitary studies at home; however, depressed by his mother's death, he left home to accept employment with Osbern Huitdeniers, a London sheriff. Becket's first job contributed to his political education, affording him first-hand experience with the government of London. At the age of fourteen, young Becket had spent some time with a nobleman named Richer de l'Aigle from whom he learned the arts of venery and falconry. This informal secular training combined with the formal religious education helped groom Becket for the position of chancellor and prepared him for future friendship with Henry II.

London in the 1140's was the center of a civil war which raged between Stephen of Blois and Matilda, daughter of Henry I. The relative calm of serving a political official was short-lived in such a city; consequently Becket sought a new position in 1141. He recognized the Church as a center of stability in the middle of political turmoil and,

with appropriate letters of introduction, obtained a place in the current Archbishop of Canterbury's, Theobald's, staff.

This event was certainly a turning point in Becket's career: a man of his scholastic brilliance had no difficulty advancing himself in the Church. Fully aware of Becket's capabilities, Archbishop Theobald sent the young clerk to further his studies in civil and canon law at Bologna and Auxerre, both famous Continental centers of legal training. Theobald's motive for advancing Becket's education became apparent ten years later, when he promoted Becket to the post of archdeacon, the key legal and administrative position in the diocese of Canterbury.

During those ten years of Becket's security within the Church, England was far from calm. The dispute between the houses of Anjou and Blois had not been permanently settled: in January, 1153, the twenty-year-old Duke of Normandy, Henry of the Angevin house, invaded England. Henry effected a compromise with the reigning king, Stephen of Blois, which called for the Duke's succession to the English throne on the king's death. Stephen died in October, 1154, and on December 19, 1154, the Duke of Normandy became Henry II, unopposed monarch of England.

One of the most important facts about medieval England that must be kept in mind was the close tie between the administration of the Church and the State: many royal officials came to their positions through the Church. Archbishop

Theobald, virtual governor of England from the death of Stephen to the coronation of Henry, felt uncertain about this new youthful foreign king. With a desire to install in the king's court a capable administrator who could guide the king, Theobald recommended the thirty-seven-year-old Thomas Becket for the position of chancellor. Henry accepted Theobald's suggestion and, by January, 1155, the two men, destined for deep friendship and bitter enmity, met.

To understand the relationship between Henry and Becket, it is necessary to evaluate the personality of each. Carefully bringing together contemporary reports on King Henry, Richard Winston analyzes him thus:

> Henry II, the greatest of the Angevins, contained within himself all the contradictions of his line. He had a unique capacity for friendship, by all accounts; yet we are also told that he "mourned the dead with a grief far greater than he loved the living." He was a great organizer who laid the foundations of many institutions by which England is still governed today; yet in his personal life no one could have been more disorganized. Incessantly active, on his feet from dawn to dusk, changing his plans from moment to moment, he made life a hell for his courtiers, who tried in vain to bring order into the chaos the king half deliberately created around him.[3]

Ironically, Henry's passion for recording the laws of England arose not from his desire for organization but from his lack of knowledge about English customs: this penchant for writing out all the customs of the land would later provide the basis for much of the controversy between the king and

Becket. This paradoxical Henry would prove a more than able opponent for the proud Becket in the struggle to come.

The struggle between the two men was, however, far in the future; for the present a ready friendship sprang up between the king and his newly appointed close advisor. The disparity in their ages made no difference; the king and his chancellor sported together like boys. This intimacy was not without its price: during his years as chancellor wielding royal power, Becket made many enemies. Becket proved an able administrator, zealously reclaiming land once belonging to the crown. He was solidly the king's man; Theobald's underlying desire to see in the secular government someone interested in the Church was unfulfilled in Becket.

The chancellorship afforded Becket opportunity to cultivate his taste for luxury. Since the king cared little about his personal appearance, Becket made himself personal representative of the king and set up a magnificent household. His table was set with choice wines and delicate foods; he himself dressed in splendid robes. He wanted his presence to testify to the greatness of the king he served. One particular occasion provided an excellent opportunity for this show of royal magnificence: in 1158 Becket departed on his famous embassy to Paris to arrange a marriage between young Henry, the three-year-old son of the king, and Marguerite, the baby daughter of Louis VII of France. As Richard Winston records the details of the entourage, it becomes evident that

Becket intended to impress the French king and his people with the greatness of Henry:

> He [Becket] had with him twenty-four changes of clothing, much of it pure silk, as well as rare furs, tapestries, and carpets "such as adorn the bedchamber of a bishop." In his train were some two hundred members of his household: knights, clerks, stewards, servants, squires, and pages . . .The procession kept to a strict order as it passed through the French villages. First came footmen walking in groups of six and ten and singing songs in English. They were followed at an interval by leashed hounds and their keepers. Then came the wagons, with the contents covered with hides. These were followed by the packhorses with their grooms and monkeys; then the squires bearing the knights' shields and leading their chargers; after these the servants; then the knights and clerks. Last of all came the chancellor,[4] riding with a few of his close friends.

Needless to say, the mission was successful. This description reinforces the portrait of Becket as a man fond of luxury and show; but the show was not a substitute for political ability.

Becket's service to Henry extended to the military realm: having maneuvered the necessary finances, he accompanied his king on the 1154 campaign against Toulouse. During this campaign Becket and Henry had their first known disagreement, over military strategy; ignoring Becket's advice, Henry held firm and the argument was soon forgotten. Disagreements were the exception rather than the rule, evidence of the strength of friendship between Becket and Henry.

But though such small disagreements could not weaken this friendship, a major event took place which ultimately led to the division between the king and his chancellor--on April 18, 1161, the aged Archbishop Theobald died, and Henry chose Becket for the vacant position.

This appointment was not immediate; in fact, the position remained vacant for more than a year, but Henry moved with determination. His reasons for appointing Thomas Becket were two-fold: only the Archbishop of Canterbury had the legal right to perform a coronation, and Henry desired his eldest son crowned; furthermore, Henry hoped to unite the administration of the Church and the State in England in one person, Thomas Becket, and so avoid future conflicts with the Church. Whatever Henry may have desired, Becket saw the issues in a different light; when asked by the king to accept the position, he did not refuse, but he warned Henry this office would force a division between them.

The king's will was effected and the bishops elected Becket to fill the position of Archbishop of Canterbury. On Sunday, June 3, 1162, the formalities were concluded with the consecration of Becket. Sincerely believing himself inadequate for his new task, he took two important steps: he made priestly vows, and he resigned, with the consent of the young prince Henry who governed England in title during his father's frequent absences to visit the Continent, his post as chancellor. The resignation was a crucial cause of the

quarrel which would erupt between Henry II and Becket within two years.

Before a detailed discussion of this controversy is possible, two influencing factors must be considered: the Gregorian reforms accomplished in the Church, and the schism in the papacy. The Gregorian reforms in England began during the 1070's under Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of William the Conqueror. Lanfranc reorganized the Church and asserted the primacy of Canterbury over other bishoprics; furthermore, he placed the Church under the monarch's control. More important than the structural reorganization was the establishment of ecclesiastical courts: the new system maintained separate spiritual and secular courts, and no one with ecclesiastical standing could be tried in a secular court. The question of the legality of ecclesiastical courts became the center of the controversy: Becket determined to defend the Church's right to try its members, and Henry, through the Constitutions of Clarendon, vowed to destroy ecclesiastical immunities.

The second influence on the controversy, the schism in the papacy, arose following the death of Pope Adrian IV in 1159. Immediately after his death, the papacy became the prize sought by three contending parties: eventually, the contention was limited to two groups, those adhering to the late Pope's policies and those supporting the emperor Frederick Barbarossa. Alexander III, as the papal supremacists' new

pope, gained the support of much of the Western world. Though all this activity occurred prior to Becket's ascension to the see of Canterbury, it would profoundly influence the controversy with Henry: Alexander was too clearly dependent on the kings Henry II and Louis VII to stand firm for Archbishop Thomas Becket.

The first hint of controversy between Henry II and the new Archbishop came with Henry's reaction to Becket's resignation of the chancellorship. Henry felt betrayed by his friend. Such misunderstanding was to mark the entire struggle. In England, as the new Archbishop, Becket worked with the same zeal he had once directed to the king's affairs: he set about to reclaim the lands which had once belonged to Canterbury, and, in so doing, created many new enemies. The first real clash, however, occurred over financial matters; Henry demanded a tax of the "sheriff's aid," money which sherffs used for their own benefit, and Thomas opposed the king. Apparently, Becket thought he could act in his former role as the king's advisor; but Henry misinterpreted the opposition as the beginning of rebellion. This initial clash was quickly followed by a more significant one centering on specific clerical immunities. Soon the initial issues were forgotten and the conflict narrowed down to the question of the king's authority over all ecclesiastical matters; Becket agreed to be obedient to Henry in all matter, "saving my order," and by sheer force of personality kept his bishops

behind him.

The controversy now focused on these three words, "saving my order," so obnoxious to King Henry. Finally, Becket privately recanted the words. The king, anxious to have this submission made public, summoned the bishops to the royal hunting lodge at Clarendon; but Becket temporized and evaded a public statement, begging the counsel of his bishops. At this point, Henry flew into a rage, and Becket, possibly fearful for the safety of those in his responsibility, eventually yielded. Henry, pressing his victory, called for the recording of the customs of the land to which Becket had yielded; the resulting document, the Constitutions of Clarendon, attempted to define the extent of the freedom of the Church. Church customs, previously unwritten and open to expedient compromise, were now iron-clad in writing; Becket and his bishops were naturally horrified. The Constitutions provided for many customs threatening to the Church: clergy were not permitted to leave the kingdom without the king's permission; appeals to Rome were banned; clerks could be tried in the king's court.[5] Becket had been trapped into formal consent to these articles.

Apparently, Becket gradually became aware that the quarrel between himself and the king was no simple matter; exile, rather than reconciliation, seemed the inevitable outcome. Twice, following the fiasco at Clarendon, Becket tried to leave England; twice his attempts were frustrated. Exile

came only after the confrontation with Henry at Northampton. Becket received a summons to attend a great council on Tuesday, October 6, 1164. However, what resulted at Northampton closely resembled a trial: Becket was charged variously with contempt of court, failure to account for royal funds entrusted to him as chancellor, and, finally, treason. Unprepared for such preposterous charges, Becket remained proud and unyielding. A furious debate raged, with Henry in an upper hall refusing to see Becket, who was in the lower hall, until a verdict of treason was reached. Curiously, the verdict was never delivered because Becket refused to hear judgment. Brandishing his episcopal cross before him like a weapon, Becket left the hall. In the evening, many of his bishops who had deserted him at the hearing, now came with proposals of reconciliation, claiming that the controversy could easily be settled by an appropriate sum of money. Becket, not so foolish, rejected the proposal. Other plans were underway: that night the Archbishop rode north to Lincoln, a seventy-mile journey. After a three-day rest, Becket began slowly to travel south toward Sandwich, a sailing port near Canterbury. Two weeks later, still undiscovered by the king's men, the Archbishop and three companions set sail for France on All Souls' Day, November 2, 1164.

The exile was to last six years. Louis VII received Becket, granted him security, and made handsome financial

provisions for the exiles. Given this peace, Becket began to direct the activities that would occupy his time in exile: he set about to justify his argument with King Henry. The prime object of these activities was Pope Alexander, likewise an exile in France. Amy Kelly summarizes the ineffectiveness of the Pope:

> His policies with both Henry and Becket were alternately stern and conciliatory. If he authorized Becket to threaten Henry with the dread censures of the church, he cautiously annulled for Henry the effect of his suspension from grace; if he made promises to Henry, he countermanded them to Becket.[6]

The Pope was not an opportunist but a realist; however, his vacillation was frustrating and of no help to Becket. The most frequent advice he offered Becket was the need for humility.

Becket's two weapons in the conflict with Henry were letters and excommunication; he exercised both frequently. The excommunications appear to have had the greatest effect, not in hastening a reconciliation, but in creating firm enemies for Becket. Three times, Becket performed the excommunication ceremonies: the first time, in 1166 at Vézelay, he excommunicated seven men; in 1169, he reimposed sentence on most of those excommunicated three years previously; the last time, on Christmas Day, four days before his death, he excommunicated two of his bitterest enemies, the de Brocs, who had violated Canterbury lands in the Archbishop's absence.

The common reaction to excommunication was renewed hatred for Becket; in fact, the four knights who killed him first demanded suspension of the excommunication sentences. But the effect of excommunication could be serious in the religious climate of the twelfth century, as is evidenced by Winston's description of one man excommunicated, Gilbert Foliot:

> For Gilbert did not take excommunication lightly, as did some other of the royal partisans. . . .To be cut off from the Church preyed on Gilbert's mind, even though he sincerely believed that his archbishop had no legal right to impose so terrible a sentence upon him.[7]

Excommunication meant that the individual under sentence was a plague affecting all who came in contact with him: as leader of the opposition among church officials to Becket, Foliot, the Bishop of London, would certainly feel the restrictive effect of excommunication.

While Becket retaliated against those he held responsible for the controversy and his exile, many others, particularly King Louis of France and Pope Alexander, worked to bring about a reconciliation. Papal legates were constantly involved in arbitrating the quarrel; but not until 1169, with Louis and Henry at peace, did a successful meeting come about. By now, both Henry and Becket were anxious for a settlement. When they met at Montmirail, Becket threw himself at Henry's feet, but the king raised him. Becket then made a lengthy speech, concluding with a pledge of

honor to his king; after a brief pause, to the dismay of all, he added, "saving the honor of God."[8] The meeting ended with Henry's outburst of rage: reconciliation had failed.

A second attempt at reconciliation soon followed: the basis for this projected meeting was an agreement by both parties to drop all charges and claims, returning, in effect, to the status prior to the initial clashes between the two men. King Louis arranged for them to meet at the Chapel of Martyrdom on Montmartre. Terms were stated and agreed upon; the settlement seemed complete. Becket, wary of Henry's good intentions, requested a sign of sincerity, the osculum pacis, the kiss of peace, an accepted feudal mode of sealing agreements. But Henry refused on the basis that once in anger against Becket, he vowed never to grant him the kiss of peace; thus, he could not now break his oath. Becket interpreted the king's unwillingness as proof of dissimulation, At Becket's instigation, the second meeting intended to bring about reconciliation broke up.

In 1170 Henry authorized Roger, Archbishop of York and long an enemy to Thomas, to anoint and crown young prince Henry: Roger's action was a clear flaunting of Becket's primacy as Archbishop of Canterbury. King Henry's role in his son's coronation enraged the Pope, who had expressly forbidden any such action, and now Henry's domains were threatened with interdict. Henry now had several reasons to agree

on a compromise with Becket: Henry's land could be placed under interdict; there was danger of renewed war with France; the young king Henry would need mature guidance, such as Becket could offer; Becket in England could be more easily controlled than Becket in France. Thus on July 22, 1170, in Fréteval, Henry and Becket met again. At last, reconciliation was effected: the meeting between the king and the Archbishop was private, and much of what passed between them went unrecorded. As a final attempt to test the king's sincerity, Becket attempted to trick him into giving the kiss of peace required at the conclusion of the Mass; but Henry, forewarned, requested the Requiem Mass, which omits the kiss.

The last encounter between Henry and Becket took place shortly before the Archbishop sailed for England. Becket was wary, as well he might be; he was committing his physical safety to Henry. His parting words to his king evidenced his uneasiness: "My Lord, my mind tells me that when I leave you now I shall never see you again in this life."[9] Henry misunderstood this apprehension to be an accusation by Becket of the king's ill will; but Becket denied that was his meaning. The next day Becket sailed for England.

He found England more hostile than he had feared: the populace welcomed him enthusiastically, as they had always supported him; but the young prince, once loyal to Becket, now swayed by Becket's enemies, refused to see him. Many

of the barons resented Becket, his bishops failed to rally to his support, and few of his lands were returned to him. Naturally, Becket believed Henry had failed to carry out the terms of reconciliation. Once again, the Archbishop employed the only weapon available to him: after delivering the sermon on Christmas Day, he concluded the Mass with the excommunication of the de Brocs, who had illegally seized most of Canterbury's lands in Becket's absence. Simultaneously, Becket's two principal enemies, Roger of York and Gilbert Foliot of London, had crossed the Channel to meet Henry in Normandy. They misrepresented the events in England, turning Becket into a rebel leader against his king and the peasants' support of Becket into armed forces. Henry flew into one of his famous rages, and he cried out against the Archbishop: "The man ate my bread and mocks my favors. He tramples on the whole royal family. What disloyal cowards do I have in my court, that not one will free me of this lowborn priest!"[10] These words offered an opportunity to four knights of Henry's household: after an agreement, Reginald FitzUrse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito slipped away from court. From separate ports, they set sail for England, reuniting on their arrival on December 28 at Saltwood Castle.

Until the fateful meeting in the cathedral, two attitudes played a significant role in bringing these knights and the Archbishop together. The first attitude to examine is that of the four knights: apparently their intent was to

arrest Becket and return him to Henry; but their first encounter with Becket so enraged them that they soon desired his death. The second attitude involved is Becket's "martyr complex." Several events could be interpreted as reflecting such a complex. Becket had occasionally voiced his willingness to die a martyr's death, if necessary; on the morning before the final confrontation with the king, just prior to exile, Becket had recited the Mass of the first martyr, Stephen; his parting words to Henry after reconciliation and prior to Becket's departure for England--"My Lord, my mind tells me that when I leave you now I shall never see you again in this life"--suggested his feeling that his death might be the final outcome of the controversy. Becket may not have sought martyrdom; but the thought was not foreign to him.

On December 29, 1170, the four knights, apparently believing the false reports of rebellion, set out for Canterbury after requesting the aid of soldiers from neighboring castles. Acting out their role as royal officers--in Normandy, King Henry chose to believe they would unofficially act on his behalf--the knights made an initial visit to Becket to determine whether or not he would voluntarily surrender. The four found him in his room, deep in conversation with his followers; the knights did not interrupt. When Becket acknowledged their presence, a sharp interchange filled with accusations on both sides followed. Greatly

angered by Becket's implacable stubbornness, they left hastily, shouting threats to return and take Becket by force.

The knights stopped in the great hall of Canterbury and there armed themselves as if for battle: Becket, remaining in his room, now seemed determined to die for the principles in which he believed. The monks and attendants about him tried to drag him into the cathedral, which could easily be barricaded; but he resisted. Finally he agreed, not to run to the church for refuge but to go and recite the Vespers. It was nearly evening and the interior of the cathedral was darkened. As Becket's followers were urging him to take refuge at the high altar, the four knights burst into the church. At first, unable to see him, they called out his name, and Becket turned from the altar-steps to face his pursuers. Again sharp words were exchanged, and the knights tried to lay hands on him; but he fought back without his customary dignity. Becket flung an insult at FitzUrse, who raised his sword in response and swung at the Archbishop: only one man, Edward Grim, stood by Becket and raised his arm to ward off the first blow against his Archbishop. Shortly all four men struck Becket again and again, inflicting horrible blows on his head, until Brito delivered the death blow--he cut off the crown of Becket's head, shattering the sword in two. Becket's last words reaffirmed his desire for martyrdom: "For the name of Jesus, and the defense of the Church, I embrace death."[11]

The news of the murder travelled quickly. By January 1, 1171, Henry knew; immediately he retired to his room and for three days mourned, refusing food and consolation. Eventually he did penance to absolve himself of any guilt by travelling as a common pilgrim to Canterbury, there submitting to whipping by the Canterbury monks and an all-night vigil in the cathedral. Almost as rapid as the spreading news of Becket's death was the effect on the Church: overnight he was transformed into a saint, and a rash of miracles attributed to him erupted. Formal recognition of his martyrdom came early in March of 1173 with Pope Alexander's decree of canonization. Less than two years after his murder, Becket emerged triumphant in public memory: only the centuries which afford retrospect have lightened the harsh judgment against Henry II.

The entire history of Thomas Becket, so involved and complex, cannot be transformed into drama without retaining some facts, deleting some, and altering others. The process of choice is the central problem of this study: what did Eliot and Anouilh choose to incorporate into their plays, and what motivated their choices? Christopher Fry, author of Curtmantle (1961), another play centering on the Becket-Henry II friendship, comments on the problem of

writing an historical drama:

> If a playwright is rash enough to treat real events at all, he has to accept a double responsibility: to drag out of the sea of detail a story simple enough to be understood by people who knew nothing about it before; and to do so without distorting the material he has chosen to use. Otherwise let him invent his characters, let him go to Ruritania for his history.
>
> To try to re-create what has taken place in this world (or, indeed, to write about life at all) is to be faced by the task of putting a shape on almost limitless complexity. The necessity for shaping--for "making a play of it"--is inherent in us, because pattern and balance are pervading facts of the universe.[12]

Though Fry is reflecting his personal approach to drama, he sets forth several guidelines with which I agree: drama based on history must be sufficiently simple to center attention on the desired meaning rather than the historical facts; the dramatist, in choosing history, has a responsibility not to distort that history; the dramatist must shape the history he chooses.

In order to evaluate the success of Eliot and Anouilh in these areas, it is necessary to establish their motivations for choosing the Becket story. For Eliot, the choice was simplified: asked to write a drama for the 1935 Canterbury Festival, Eliot chose the obvious subject, the martyrdom of Thomas Becket. Not only was the subject determined, but knowledge of the audience's expectation influenced

Eliot's drama. Philip Headings comments on the extent of the influence on Eliot's writing:

> The fact that Murder in the Cathedral was to be performed before an officially Christian audience in a cathedral and as a part of a Christian festival had much to do with both the choice of subject and the treatment given it. These factors made it plausible, for instance, to follow the classical unities of place and action rather closely; and they also made it natural to use a sermon as interlude. They also importantly influenced the character and the use of the chorus, and they suggested the direct involvement of the audience, so effectively achieved through the use of the Knights' speeches, the sermon, and the choruses.[13]

Essentially, the Canterbury Festival helped determine the shape of Eliot's drama. Doubtless, his joining the Anglican Church in 1927 made him more receptive to the religious nature of the drama's subject.

Eliot was not accepting a subject alien to his thinking. In many of his essays, Eliot develops his theories concerning individual liberty: Thomas Becket epitomized the man fully developed in relation to God and, as such, offered Eliot the chance to deal with a Christian conception of human freedom. Carol H. Smith deals with the discovery by Eliot's hero that the "Catholic" view of life is the only acceptable one:

> By recognizing divine necessity, the central character frees himself from subjection to human desires of the flesh, from the horror of the world's apparent disorder, and ultimately from the human

limitations of physical death. By recognizing the existence of free-will, he also gains release from the determinism of the modern scientific world view. And typically, as the hero's discovery is made manifest, those around him demonstrate levels of awareness of the true meaning of freedom.[14]

Becket is, therefore, a reflection of Eliot's philosophies; Eliot does not view him as an individual but as an example of Christian martyrdom. Writing on the development of Murder in the Cathedral, Eliot identifies the point of concentration in his drama: "I did not want to increase the number of characters, I did not want to write a chronicle of twelfth-century politics . . .I wanted to concentrate on death and martyrdom."[15] The history of Becket is unimportant except as it leads to and illuminates his death: selectivity of historical fact, not violation of historical fact, is the intent of Eliot's drama.

Jean Anouilh's motives for selecting the Becket story as material for drama differ vastly from Eliot's. Anouilh first encountered the story by chance; he had acquired a copy of Augustin Thierry's History of the Conquest of England by the Normans and read the chapter on the conflict involving Becket.[16] The view Thierry presents of Becket is highly romanticized, charming, and inaccurate. The story begins with Gilbert Beket, a soldier who assumed the cross, journeyed to Jerusalem, and there, taken prisoner, encountered the daughter of a Saracen chief. To this union, a son,

Thomas, was born. Thierry's entire account revolves around the Saxon origin of Becket and his torment at the Norman occupation of England. Despite his Saxon birth, he had the good sense to ingratiate himself with his conquerors and advanced until he became Henry's chancellor. From this high position he was appointed Archbishop. In his journey to success, Becket had forgotten his humble origins; however, as Archbishop, he soon became the champion of the downtrodden Saxons. Following his return from exile, the public acclaim for Becket reached its height; Saxons armed themselves to follow and defend their Archbishop. It was this mass rebellion that enraged Henry and prompted his condemnation of Becket, which the four knights interpreted and carried out as a death sentence.[17] History has progressed since Thierry, and romanticized portrait of Becket is now regarded as false.

It was not until the completion of his drama that Anouilh discovered Thierry's view of Becket was incorrect; but the impression had already been made and Anouilh chose to retain his original conception of Becket: "I was dazzled. I had expected to find a saint--I am always a trifle distrustful of saints--and I found a man."[18] Anouilh had based much of his drama on Becket's Saxon origin; when he knew that premise was incorrect, Anouilh faced the problem of the historical inaccuracy of his drama:

> I decided that if history in the next fifty years should go on making pro-

> gress it will perhaps rediscover that Becket was indubitably of Saxon origin; in any case, for this drama of friendship between two men, between the king and his friend, his companion in pleasure and in work (and this is what had gripped me about the story), this friend whom he could not cease to love though he became his worst enemy the night he was named archbishop--for this drama it is a thousand times better that Becket remained a Saxon.[19]

Anouilh has accepted an altered view of history to emphasize a central part of his drama, which deals with the problem of friendship, which is not restricted to history. Henry II and Becket are not conceived of as men in a specific time and place, but as men, once friends, who suddenly find themselves in an irreconcilable conflict.

As the succeeding chapters of this study will demonstrate, both Eliot and Anouilh simplify the historical facts, fulfilling one quality of drama based on history. Both dramatists, according to their philosophies, bring shape to that history: Eliot employs a Christian view to shape his drama; Anouilh, an existential view. Both men are responsible to the history of Becket; but both men, in varying degrees, distort that history.

Chapter II

The Man Becket

Although it may be safely said that Jean Anouilh owes little or nothing to T. S. Eliot's play or even to his dramatic theory, the two authors can be linked: both use Thomas Becket as a central figure in drama. The similarity between Murder in the Cathedral (1935) and Becket (1960) is not in dramatic theory or technique but in the treatment of the historical Thomas Becket. Emil Roy, one of the few critics who directly compare the two dramas, says that both Eliot and Anouilh use the stage as a communicatory medium, with similar characters and story to demonstrate an idea each author takes to be an "indiscussable truth."[1]

Discovery of the meaning of this "indiscussable truth" begins with the man Becket, for it is with the man that the two playwrights take up the historical account of Thomas Becket. Anouilh's drama opens with the penitent Henry doing homage at Becket's tomb. As he kneels naked in the cathedral in the early gray light of morning, he begins to recall the times past. Through flashback, Anouilh transports audience and Henry to an early morning in the royal bedchamber. Anouilh introduces young, pleasure-loving Becket, who has inched his way through kingly circles to become a close and dear friend of Henry II.

Through his flashback, Anouilh has brought together the

chronological beginning and end of the Becket story. Becket is dead; yet his influence is still felt through the homage accorded him by the king. Anouilh then reverses time to trace the origin and nature of Becket's influence as a person. Becket early displays a flair for perfectionism, the desire to perform well whatever task is at hand. He offers, in this initial scene, to perform the menial task of rubbing down the King. He explains his action to Henry: "I am your servant, my prince, that's all. Helping you govern or helping you get warm is part of the same thing to me. I like helping you."[2]

As a member of the conquered Saxon race, Becket aligns himself with the Normans for his own personal advancement and pursuit of pleasure:

> "I adore hunting, and only Normans and their proteges had the right to hunt. I adore luxury and luxury was Norman. I adore life and the Saxons' only birthright was slaughter. I'll add that I adore honor" (Anouilh, p. 16).

When the surprised King questions the reconciliation between collaboration with the Normans and Becket's honor, Becket replies, "I had the right to draw my sword against the first Norman nobleman who tried to lay hands on my sister. I killed him in single combat. It's a detail, but it has its points" (Anouilh, p. 16). Jesse Gatlin sees in Becket's evolving concept of honor the key to Anouilh's drama.[3] This scene demonstrates Becket's personal honor as a Saxon. The

points of honor are very blunt: though Becket's sister may be free from the threat of rape, she can be accepted only as a mistress for a Norman, never as a wife. Her status in life is not greatly changed, but her "honor" is preserved.

The honor theme reappears in an incident involving Gwendolen, Becket's beautiful Welsh mistress, who is solely devoted to him. But King Henry envies Becket's appetency for the beautiful and covets Gwendolen. Recalling a whimsical promise from Becket of "favor for favor," Henry now demands Gwendolen as that favor. Becket cannot reciprocate his mistress' love; he enjoys the pleasures she offers him, but he would do nothing for her. Once again, in this unpleasant situation, Becket makes the gentlemanly move and honors his word.

It is Gwendolen who first sees the deep fault in Becket as his willingness to sacrifice anything to maintain his word of honor. Though he has enjoyed Gwendolen's beauty and grace, he cannot see in her a reflection of his own plight as a member of a conquered race. Gwendolen asks, "If he /Henry/ sends me away tomorrow, will my Lord take me back?" (Anouilh, p. 43), to which the elegant Becket replies no. He cannot accept another man's discarded plaything.

But Anouilh balances the portrait of the man Becket by showing him elsewhere capable of sympathy. When the King and Becket are hawking in the woods, they are caught in a

downpour of rain and take shelter in a humble Saxon's hut. In vain the terrified man has hidden his daughter to protect her honor, but the King discovers her. Henry views the Saxon peasants as filthy animals; yet Becket knows they are capable of feelings and emotions. Becket greatly amuses the King by calling the peasant man his son; yet in that simple phrase he is identifying with the humble folk as he later will do with the Saxon priest. To the King's query, "It's so ugly and yet it makes such pretty daughters. How do you explain that?" (Anouilh, p. 32) Becket gives a lyric answer:

> "He may have had one night of love, one minute when he too was a King, and shed his fear. Afterwards, his pauper's life went on, eternally the same. And he and his wife no doubt forgot it all. But the seed was sown" (Anouilh, p. 32).

Anouilh is revealing another facet of Becket the man. Henry, with all his attentions on matters of government or on his own coarse pleasures, has never seen the Saxons as people; to him they are filthy vermin. To Becket, schooled at court in the best tradition, these Saxons are not animals; they are humans worthy of being well-treated.

Becket's concern for the Saxon peasant is objectified when Henry capriciously decides to take the Saxon girl with him as his latest mistress. Becket, seeing in the Saxons a reflection of his own desire to defend his sister's virtue, intervenes on the girl's behalf and promises Henry to return

"favor for favor."[4] Becket also advises the girl's brash young brother, who had reacted in an attempt to save his sister's virtue as Becket had reacted, to seek refuge from punishment.

Anouilh later brings Becket into contact with another member of the conquered Saxon race. By this time, Becket holds the post of Chancellor and, as such, accompanies the King to France on a military campaign. A young monk has been caught prowling about the camp with a knife. The case attracts Becket's attention and, dismissing the guards, he begins to question the young man, who is immediately identified as a Saxon by his speech. The monk had intended to kill someone of rank, perhaps the King, to rid himself of the shame of being Saxon. In this naive desire Becket sees his own plight and, through his authority as Chancellor, takes the young monk under his jurisdiction. He explains his seemingly pointless interest to the monk:

> "It's pure selfishness, you know. Your life hasn't any sort of importance for me, obviously, but it's very rare for Fate to bring one face to face with one's own ghost, when young" (Anouilh, p. 62).

He is reminded of his pain as a Saxon lad burdened with the shame of his vanquished race; yet he also knows the futility of shouldering the whole burden alone. Becket has long forsaken the brashness exhibited by the monk, but the lad has stirred Becket's memory. The lad's bravery is for a cause,

while Becket delights in bravery merely for the exhilaration of danger.

Accomplished in love, courtly manners, and graces, Becket is also an efficient fighter. Though he has all these qualities, he is neither liked nor trusted by the Norman barons. They do not understand someone who thinks; yet they cannot accuse him of lack of prowess in battle. A baron relates an incident which reinforces the degree of perfection for which Becket strives in all areas:

> "You can't say he isn't a fighter. Yesterday when the King was in the thick of it, after his squire was killed, he /Becket/ cut his way right through the French, and he seized the King's banner and drew the enemy off and onto himself" (Anouilh, p. 51).

The barons are inferior to Becket; therefore, even though they dislike him, they must wait until he makes a false move to destroy him.

Anouilh shows Becket a perfect gentleman in all his personal pursuits: he is ready with the correct word or action at just the proper moment. He honors his word to the king without honoring the deeper bond of friendship to Gwendolen. He claims the right to defend his sister from rape without saving her from becoming a Norman's mistress. Becket sees his general conduct as an area in which to exercise his perfectionism; yet he is living a shallow and superficial life, and no one is more acutely aware of this dilemma than

Becket. Anouilh undermines Becket's perfectionism with the obvious ambiguity of Becket's motives. If there is an "indiscussable truth" by which men live, Becket's only present course is to search and hope for it.

In direct contrast to Anouilh's searching Becket, Eliot's Becket is from the outset of the drama a saint already made. Though his martyrdom and canonization have not taken place, his heart is set toward sainthood, and, thus, little is shown of the man Becket. But Eliot does offer a brief glimpse of the former Thomas through the three Tempters' speeches: the first Tempter reveals a pleasure-loving Thomas; the second Tempter shows Thomas the politician; the third Tempter reveals a power-hungry Thomas. The Tempters may be seen as the incarnate memories of Thomas' past, and, in attempts to distract him from the path of sainthood, they recall the joys he had once known.

With the concentration of Eliot's subject, it is neither desirable nor necessary to show a pleasure-seeking Thomas wining and dining with the King. Where the strength of Anouilh's drama comes through a visual and aural presentation of pleasure, Eliot must rely on imagistic poetry. Thomas is quickly returned to the past by the appearance of the first Tempter:

> ". . .Remembering all the good time past.
> Your Lordship won't despise an old friend out of favor?
> Old Tom, gay Tom, Becket of London,
> Your Lordship won't forget that evening on the river
> When the King, and you and I were all friends together?"[5]

With Thomas' mind on the past, the Tempter appeals to the sensory:

> "Fluting in the meadows, viols in the hall,
> Laughter and apple-blossom floating on the water,
> Singing at nightfall, whispering in chambers,
> Fires devouring the winter season,
> Eating up the darkness, with wit and wine and wisdom!" (Eliot, p. 24).

The poetry reveals the powerful temptation of these past pleasures; yet Thomas discerns they are indeed past. Just as Anouilh's Becket chooses to forsake pleasure when he becomes Archbishop, Eliot's Becket now rejects the first Tempter and his offer.

The Tempter is not so easily dissuaded. Having failed to entice Thomas with an image of past pleasure, he says these pleasures are also for the present season:

> "Spring has come in winter. Snow in the branches
> Shall float as sweet as blossoms. Ice along the ditches
> Mirror the sunlight. Love in the orchard
> Send the sap shooting. Mirth matches melancholy" (Eliot, p. 24).

Thomas, not fool enough to think he can make time move backwards to return him to his past, remains firm in his choice: "Only/ The fool, fixed in his folly, may think/ He can turn the wheel on which he turns" (Eliot, p. 25). His mind is set, and not even the strong temptation of pleasure can distract him.

Through different literary methods, then, Anouilh and Eliot have shown the personal life of the man Becket, who,

destined for martyrdom, must give up his life. Anouilh has dramatized the past by realistically portraying scenes involving this gay Becket of London. By personifying Thomas' memories in the Tempters, Eliot has achieved a dramatic effect superior to Anouilh's visual presentation. Eliot's restraint is both effective and necessary: effective in the demonstration of the sensual past; necessary for the description of a man set toward martyrdom. Anouilh, however, is not concerned with a ready-made saint and has no reason to underline Becket's purity; therefore, he can visualize a sensual Becket.

Becket was a man not only of pleasure but also of politics. The friendship between Henry and Becket remains strong as Anouilh presents the political Becket. It is of great importance that the first political scene of Becket introduces the conflict between Church and State. Well aware of Becket's intellect, Henry appoints him to the office of Chancellor of England: "Get up, Thomas. I never did anything without your advice anyway. Nobody knew it, now everybody will, that's all" (Anouilh, p. 18). The aged Archbishop, who witnesses the scene, prepares to make a speech, but he is cut short by Henry: "Thank you, Archbishop! I knew this nomination would please you. But don't rely too much on Becket to play your game. He is my man"

(Anouilh, p. 19). (The King is to discover soon that Becket is no one's man and that he plays no one's game.)

Just as Becket was a perfect gentleman, he is also a perfect politician. Becket's political ability makes it possible for Henry to extract the absentee tax from the clergy. He begins by reasoning with the clergy, but when this effort fails, he is blunt:

> "I think, Your Highness, that it is pointless to pursue a discussion in which neither speaker is listening to the other. The law and custom of the land give us the means of coercion. We will use them" (Anouilh, p. 23).

Becket has no qualms about the treachery this coercion poses toward the Mother Church; England is his mother now.

Becket may be a perfectionist in politics, but he does not crave a political career. Though the appointment to the Chancellorship had come as a great surprise, he readily accepted the King's favor, realizing the King's desire for a friend in political circles. He justifies the King's trust: he is the best Chancellor possible. Though Becket is now the enemy of the Church, as service to the State requires, he does not fool the ailing Archbishop of Canterbury. The old man looks deep into the true worth of Becket:

> "His [Thomas'] is a strange, elusive nature. . .I've had plenty of opportunity to observe him, in the bustle of pleasure and daily living. He is as it were detached. As if seeking his real self. . .And I am not sure that this one will always be our enemy" (Anouilh, p. 26).

"Detached" is the key to this speech and to Becket's entire nature. Henry often asks Becket if he loves anyone. On one occasion, when Becket gives no answer, Henry cries,

> "You can't tell a lie. I know you.
> Not because you're afraid of lies--
> I think you must be the only man who
> isn't afraid of anything--not even
> Heaven--but because it's distasteful
> to you. You consider it inelegant.
> What looks like morality in you is
> nothing more than esthetics" (Anouilh, p. 42).

Becket makes total commitments to nothing, not even morality. All his pursuits, whether in love, war, or politics, confirm his dilettantism. Even Becket's code of values has been reduced to a matter of esthetics and elegance. Once again Anouilh undercuts Becket's pursuits with the ambiguity of his motives; his life is void of any consuming passion.

Gwendolen is aware of this void in Becket's life. Bound by his word of honor to Henry, he makes no attempt to save Gwendolen from the King. Though she does not upbraid him for his inaction, she gently reminds him that he too belongs to a conquered race. Conquered people have little left to call their own, save honor, and Becket admits, "There is a gap in me where honor ought to be" (Anouilh, p. 44). Gwendolen takes the only remaining course of positive action: she commits suicide. The King, sick with the sight of death and with fear, returns to Becket to be comforted. Becket does not flinch from this task and calms the troubled Henry. As Gatlin observes, Gwendolen's death is a foreshadowing of

and pattern for the kind of honor Becket must attain.[6] Becket has not discovered his true self, as the Archbishop stated. His search focuses on honor, and, as he watches the sleeping Henry, he muses, "So long as Becket is obliged to improvise his honor, he will serve you. . .But where is Becket's honor?" (Anouilh, p. 47). Political service to the King is simply another way to give life some meaning, and Becket will forsake this as readily as he forsook sensual pleasure.

The political Becket sketched by Eliot is not involved in a search for personal meaning. No sooner has Thomas dismissed the first of the Tempters than the second appears, appealing directly to Thomas' political ambitions:

> "The Chancellorship that you resigned
> When you were made Archbishop--that was a
> mistake
> On your part--still may be regained. Think,
> my Lord,
> Power obtained grows to glory" (Eliot, p. 27).

He comes offering Thomas control of this world's affairs. To Thomas' query, "To the man of God what gladness?" the Tempter replies, ". . .Sadness/ Only to those giving love to God alone. . ./ Power is present. Holiness hereafter" (Eliot, p. 27). The riches of life are easily obtained, and the Tempter places these within Thomas' grasp: "King commands. Chancellor richly rules" (Eliot, p. 28). The Tempter spurns the gains of spiritual power: "Real power/ Is purchased at price of a certain submission./ Your

spiritual power is earthly perdition./ Power is present, for him who will wield" (Eliot, p. 28).

Though Thomas may indulge in verbal fencing, he is never seriously swayed by the offer of temporal power: a return to politics would be a descent to a "punier power." Thomas believes that keeping the keys of heaven and hell brings greater power than serving temporal kings. In his exultant speech he turns away from the second Tempter:

> "Temporal power, to build a good world,
> To keep order, as the world knows order.
> Those who put their faith in worldly order
> Not controlled by the order of God,
> In confident ignorance, but arrest disorder,
> Make it fast, breed fatal disease,
> Degrade what they exalt. Power with the King--
> I <u>was</u> the King, his arm, his better reason.
> But what was once exaltation
> Would now be only mean descent" (Eliot, pp. 30-31).

A return to the intrigue of court is no honor for Becket. As he says, "I <u>was</u> the King," he knows the greatest power on earth a man can know.

The two authors are not, however, primarily concerned with the man Becket. They both portray that side of Becket to give deeper meaning to their "indiscussable truths." Jacques Guichardnaud, in discussing Anouilh's dramatic intentions, notes that all Anouilh's characters have a deep wish for purity or happiness, an absolute; but the realization of that wish is prevented by a sordid, illusory surrounding

world. Since anyone who accept a compromise with this world is defiled, the hero has no recourse but flight.[7] In his great plays, Anouilh's hero finally transcends good and evil through an increasingly clear refusal to play the game of life.[8]

Anouilh's purpose in portraying the man is now more easily understood. Though Becket is involved in the many aspects of the game of life, he withdraws from these involvements so that he, as Anouilh's hero, can transcend this sordid life. Even his participation in the game is elusive. As Guichardnaud notes, Becket is beyond the sordid and beyond love. What interests him is not debauchery but perfection in debauchery.[9] Becket's involvement in present diversions is also tempered by his quest for an absolute reality; yet, ironically, he can give himself to no one. He does not love Gwendolen, only her charms. He does not love his King, though he is loyal to him. Becket resorts to labelling things in order to impose meaning on existence: "Because, without labels the world would have no shape" (Anouilh, p. 27). When Henry asks why it is so important to give the world a shape, Becket replies, "It's essential, my prince, otherwise we can't know what we're doing" (Anouilh, p. 27). By labelling Gwendolen as mistress and Henry as King, Becket hopes to give his world a meaningful shape, until he finds his "honor" to give an all-encom-

passing absolute for life.

The quest of Eliot's Becket differs vastly from that of Anouilh's Becket. Francis Fergusson believes that Eliot does not seek to grasp Thomas imaginatively as a person, but rather postulates such a man and places him, not in God's world, but in a theological scheme.[10] The lack of interaction between characters supports this theory: Eliot sees in Thomas the making of a Christian saint and martyr, not an individual; thus, the action of the drama is primarily interior. Since, as Helen Gardner notes, the play opens so near its climax that any inner development is impossible, Thomas can hardly be said to be tempted.[11] The first three Tempters do not really tempt Thomas, but they do reveal a secular past that has been forsaken and overcome for the spiritual present. Since Thomas has risen above the temptations the three Tempters hold before him, he has ceased to be an ordinary man. The Tempters reveal Becket's past as sharp contrast with the expectation of martyrdom.

Alike in external circumstances, Anouilh's Becket and Eliot's Becket are headed in separate directions. Anouilh's Becket pursues a solitary, existential search for an absolute truth to give his life its greatest meaning, even if it involves a withdrawal from a sordid and illusory world. Eliot's Becket searches for the will of God to find

in it his own will and path of martyrdom. Both authors are interested in the development of Becket the man, but they are more concerned with Becket the cleric. In 1162 the historical Becket was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry II. Once again, the King was seeking a friend in ecclesiastical circles to work for the King's cause. But Becket forsook his secular activities and affections to devote himself to a clerical life in harmony with his new position as head of the Roman Catholic Church in England.

Chapter III

The Cleric Becket

When Thomas Becket became Archbishop of Canterbury, he was only an archdeacon, an office obtained through secretarial services to the previous Archbishop. He had little interest in Church affairs and, though he was a trained clerk, no desire to ascend in the Church hierarchy. So it was that King Henry's choice of Becket for Archbishop greatly surprised many Church officials in England. With his acceptance of the office, Becket found himself facing a difficult task; yet he conscientiously set about to be the best Archbishop possible.

In Becket, the conflict between the Church and the State, though secondary to various conflicts between characters, is important to Anouilh in his development of Becket the cleric. As Chancellor, Becket's highest intention was to serve the State. Even such protests as Folliot's cry that Becket would plunge a dagger into the bosom of the Church, his mother, cause no remorse in Becket. His enmity toward the Church reaches its height during one of Henry's French campaigns. Becket reports that, in the King's absence, the English clergy have increased their power:

> "Piecing together all the information
> I have received from London since we've
> been on the Continent, one thing strikes
> me, and that is: that there exists in

> England a power which has grown until it almost rivals yours, my Lord. It is the power of your clergy."[1]

Ironically, it is Becket who encourages Henry to enforce his power over the Church while he can:

> "Talk sense, Sire. If you don't do the crushing now, in five years' time there will be two Kings in England, the Archbishop of Canterbury and you. And in ten years' time there will be only one" (Anouilh, p. 57).

The anticipated clash with the Church is temporarily halted when news arrives of the aged Archbishop's death. Though the timely death of the highest church official overjoys Henry, Becket's reaction is subdued. Having never felt any great love for the Church, Becket is strangely saddened by this death:

> "That little old man. . .How could that feeble body contain so much strength? . . He was the first Norman who took an interest in me. He was a true father to me. God rest his soul" (Anouil, p. 69).

Anouilh's use of the father-image makes Becket's sudden passion for the Church more plausible. It was the kindly old Archbishop in an earlier scene of the drama who provided the only reference to Becket's clerical career:

> "May I crave permission to salute, with my Lord's [Henry's] approval, my young and learned archdeacon here? For I was the first--I am weak enough to be proud of pointing it out--to notice him and take him under my wing. The presence at this Council, with the preponderant title of Chancellor of England, of one

> of our brethren--our spiritual son in a sense--is a guarantee for the Church of this country. . ." (Anouilh, p. 19).

Through the formal phrases, the Archbishop reveals a genuine concern for Becket, this spiritual son who had spent several years in the Archbishop's retinue. A deep understanding existed between the pious elderly man and the brash secular youth: they were kinsmen in spirit.

Becket's display of remorse is overlooked by the King, who is preoccupied with the conflict between the Church amd the State and with a means to solve it. He needs a friend in the ranks of the Church to be the King's man:

> "Someone who doesn't know what dizziness means. Someone who isn't even afraid of God. Thomas, my son, I need your help again and this time it's important. I'm sorry to deprive you of French girls and the fun of battle, my son, but pleasure will come later. You are going over to England" (Anouilh, p. 71).

The double reference to "my son" plays on the irony of the father-son relationship: the Archbishop was a "spiritual" father; the King claims to be a secular father. The conflict is for Becket's allegiance. As sons often do, he had forsaken the advice of his spiritual father, but now is being recalled to the affairs of the Church, the institution that fostered him and gave him his spiritual father.

Shocked as he is by Henry's desire to have him elected Primate, Becket approaches his new position respectfully.

He had once admitted to Henry that there was one thing he enjoyed: "There's one thing I do love, my prince, and that I'm sure of. Doing what I have to do and doing it well" (Anouilh, p. 55). This perfectionism controls even his approach to the position of Archbishop. His clerical position in doubt, Becket resolves to take priestly vows and be wholly suited for the task as Archbishop. He enforces these vows of sober living by forsaking secular pleasures: he sells his fine garments and household goods and gives the money to beggars. Becket, with a foresight of the outcome of his actions, warns Henry, "If I become Archbishop, I can no longer be your friend . . .I could not serve both God and you" (Anouilh, pp. 72-73).

The reactions of others to his present behavior are predictable: the servants cannot believe the sudden change and make light of his attempts to help the poor. Aware of his servants' skepticism, Becket privately expresses some doubts about his own sincerity:

> "I must say it was all very pretty stuff. A prick of vanity! The mark of an upstart. A truly saintly man would never have done the whole thing in one day. Nobody will ever believe it's genuine. I hope You haven't inspired me with all these holy resolutions in order to make me look ridiculous, Lord. It's all so new to me . . .Forgive me, Lord, but I never enjoyed myself so much in my whole life. I don't believe You are a sad God. The joy I feel shedding all my riches must be a part of your Divine intentions . . . There. Farewell, Becket. I wish there

> had been something I had regretted parting with, so I could offer it to You. Lord, are You sure You are not tempting me? It all seems far too easy" (Anouilh, pp. 74-75).

It is important that Anouilh, at this point, indicate a change in Becket's apparel; not only has he sold all his fine garments, but now he dons the coarse robes of a monk. Jacques Guichardnaud believes that Becket can play a part well only when he wears the costume symbolic of the part.[2] In order to be a good cleric and thereby identify with the honor of God, Becket puts on the monk's habit.

Through their respective concepts of honor, Anouilh effectively illustrates the conflict that arises between Henry and Becket, foreshadowed by Becket's warning. Now Becket stands for the honor of God, while Henry stands for the honor of the realm at all times. Though these concepts of honor cause enmity between two friends, Becket's concept brings him the beginning of peace: he seems to have found "Becket's honor" in defending the honor of God. It is Henry who is affected by the division and, plagued by anguish, frequently cries out, "O my Thomas!" Henry views Becket's sudden change with bitterness:

> "You think you have God's honor to defend now! I would have gone to war with all England's might behind me, and against all England's interests, to defend you, little Saxon. I would have given the honor of the Kingdom laughingly . . .for you . . .Only I

> loved you and you didn't love me . . .
> that's the difference" (Anouilh, p. 80).

The true difference, however, is that Becket is learning that honor is a concept requiring one's whole-hearted attention.

In a scene between Henry and Folliot, Bishop of London, Anouilh shows both the absence of meaning in the honor of the realm and the true meaning of the honor of God. Henry, spurned by Becket, seeks the support of Folliot, an enemy of Becket, and asks him to betray Becket. Folliot is about to accept for a profit this unsavory task, but Henry cries out, "O my Thomas!" and the Bishop, recognizing that he is being used for personal revenge, refuses to aid the King. Henry's honor of the realm means so little that he would conspire with his traditional enemies, the Church leaders, to undo Becket. Even though he accuses Becket of being like a "little boy who doesn't want to play" any more, it is Henry who is acting childishly. Folliot, presumably an advocate of the honor of God, is an example of clerical corruption and, as such, stands in contrast to Becket; Becket holds firmly for what he believes to be the honor of God.

Since in his drama Eliot is concerned, from beginning to end, with the shaping of a Christian martyr, his dramatic purposes are not served by a portrayal of the clerical career of the young Becket. By opening the drama with

the protagonist a mature, determined man, Eliot avoids all references to the formative years of Becket's spiritual life.

In Eliot's play the power struggle between Henry II and Becket is portrayed through the third Tempter, who represents the power of the Barons:

> "It is we country lords who know the country.
> And we who know what the country needs.
> It is our country. We care for the country.
> We are the backbone of the nation."[3]

While he states his case "clearly," the Tempter confuses Thomas, who asks him to explain, and the Tempter complies: "This is the simple fact:/ You have no hope of reconciliation/ With Henry the King. You look only/ To blind assertion in isolation" (Eliot, p. 32). The hopelessness of reconciliation implies a conflict that Eliot does not portray. The third Tempter offers power to Thomas:

> ". . .Other friends
> May be found in the present situation . . .
> We are for England. We are in England.
> You and I, my Lord, are Normans.
> England is a land for Norman
> Sovereignty . . .
> He [Henry] does not understand us, the
> English barons.
> We are the people" (Eliot, pp. 32-33).

Thomas' refusal of the third Tempter's offer is more a refusal to betray his King than a refusal to align himself with a temporal power:

> "If the Archbishop cannot trust the Throne,
> He has good cause to trust none but God alone.
> I ruled once as Chancellor

> And men like you were glad to wait at my door.
> Not only in the court, but in the field
> And in the tilt-yard I made many yield.
> Shall I who ruled like an eagle over doves
> Now take the shape of a wolf among wolves?
> Pursue your treacheries as you have done before:
> No one shall say that I betrayed a king" (Eliot, p. 34).

Thomas cannot turn back the wheel of Fate, and he will not succumb to the folly of attempting to do so.

With neither party willing to institute reconciliation, only one solution is possible for this division between King and Archbishop. England cannot safely contain both Becket and Henry; one of the two must leave. The events leading to exile give Anouilh further opportunity to contrast Becket and the weak Church officials. Becket speaks sharply to Folliot, who has come to inform him of the false charges against him, and to ask him to surrender to Henry: "Bishop, must I remind you that we are men of God and that we have an Honor to defend, which dates from all eternity?" (Anouilh, p. 89). Becket is becoming increasingly militant in defense of the honor of God; Folliot, once so eager to censor Becket for his unfaithfulness to the Church, is properly rebuked by Becket's zeal:

> "I was a profligate . . .perhaps a
> libertine, in any case, a worldly man.
> I loved living and I laughed at all
> these things. But you passed the bur-
> den on to me and now I have to carry
> it. I have rolled up my sleeves and
> taken it on my back and nothing will
> ever make me set it down again" (Anouilh, p. 90).

It is such zeal that forces Becket to flee to France and live in exile.

Eliot begins his play with the exile drawing to a close. The Chorus, which fears Thomas' return, voices its ambivalent feelings:

> "Seven years and the summer is over,
> Seven years since the Archbishop left us,
> He who was always kind to his people.
> But it would not be well if he should
> return" (Eliot, p. 12).

The Chorus represents the sentiment of the common people, who see only the repercussions of the return from exile and the renewed conflict between the King and Archbishop. Eliot uses these women of Canterbury to echo the popular reaction to Thomas' decision to become a martyr; this reaction, however, is not confined to the women but also extends to the priests:

> "I fear for the Archbishop, I fear for the Church,
> I know that the pride bred of sudden prosperity
> Was but confirmed by bitter adversity.
> I saw him as Chancellor, flattered by the King,
> Liked or feared by courtiers, in their over-
> bearing fashion,
> Despised and despising, always insecure;
> His pride always feeding upon his own virtues,
> Pride drawing sustenance from impartiality,
> Pride drawing sustenance from generosity,
> Loathing power given by temporal devolution,
> Wishing subjection to God alone.
> Had the King been greater, or had he been weaker
> Things had perhaps been different for
> Thomas" (Eliot, p. 17).

In speaking these words of fear, the first Priest reveals

the Church's position: Thomas' return can bring only disaster to those associated with him. Ironically, the institution Thomas will glorify refuses to stand by him. Eliot demonstrates his conception of martyrdom by totally isolating Thomas--from literal exile to an exile of far greater proportions, exile from those he seeks to save.

Though Eliot does not show Thomas in exile, Anouilh shows him both in France and in Rome. Becket desires to see the Pope, his spiritual head, for support in his conflict with the King. In the scene between the two spiritual leaders, the Pope is portrayed as an uneasy, scheming politician, a direct contrast to the single-minded Becket: "I don't want to receive him /Becket/ at all. I gather he is a sincere man. I am always disconcerted by people of that sort. They leave me with a bad taste in my mouth" (Anouilh, p. 101). The irony is obvious; as head of all Christendom, the Pope is an ignoble example, a contrast to Becket, his subordinate.

Though Anouilh develops Becket beyond the Pope's hypocritical position, he still uses him as a typical Anouilhean character. Of his duties, Becket comments to Henry, "We must only do--absurdly--what we have been given to do--right to the end" (Anouilh, p. 114). John Harvey notes that the saint who talks in such a manner has obviously been drained not only of religious conviction but also of all moral prin-

ciples.[4] In other words Becket plays the game, but he plays it as properly and as excellently as possible. Perhaps Harvey is somewhat harsh at this point, for a few lines later Becket speaks more nobly of his duties:

> "I felt for the first time that I was being entrusted with something, that's all--there in that empty cathedral, somewhere in France, that day when you [Henry] ordered me to take up this burden. I was a man without honor. And suddenly I found it--one I never imagined would become mine--the honor of God. A frail, incomprehensible honor. . ." (Anouilh, p. 114).

But even this highest calling for Becket is abstracted by a label he attaches to God. He has previously used labels to give his world shape, in order to know what he is doing, and he does so again here. Service to God becomes the defense of "the honor of God." With the reiteration of the honor theme, Anouilh stresses that Becket's quest has been essentially for "Becket's honor," not for a spiritual goal: the honor of God provides Becket with the absolute he desires for himself. This quest lacks the dramatic intensity of Eliot's presentation of Becket because Anouilh undermines his Becket by reducing the meaning of life to a matter of assigning the proper labels to objects, even to the service of God. Anouilh climaxes his portrait of Becket in the reply given to Henry's question, "Did you start to love God?": "I started to love the honor of God" (Anouilh, p. 116).

In both dramas, the exile is ended through a reconciliation meeting between Henry and Becket. Though the scenes described are similar, Eliot and Anouilh have different purposes. The reconciliation scene in Murder in the Cathedral is described by a messenger:

> "Peace, but not the kiss of peace.
> A patched-up affair, if you ask my opinion.
> And if you ask me, I think the Lord Archbishop
> Is not the man to cherish any illusions,
> Or yet to diminish the least of his pretensions.
> If you ask my opinion, I think that this peace
> Is nothing like an end, or like a beginning.
> It is common knowledge that when the Archbishop
> Parted from the King, he said to the King,
> My Lord, he said, I leave you as a man
> Whom in this life I shall not see
> again" (Eliot, p. 16).

Eliot uses the reconciliation to draw attention to the approaching martyrdom of Thomas: this "patched-up affair" is dramatically necessary. The speech also confirms the fears and the suspicions of those awaiting the return from exile: the peace between the King and the Archbishop is an uneasy one.

Anouilh uses his reconciliation scene to demonstrate the depth of the rift between the King's and the Archbishop's concepts of honor. The drama may indeed be viewed as a tragedy of friendship[5] with this pathetic attempt at reconciliation as the final wedge driving King and subject apart. The reconciliation is the end of the conflicts of honor: Becket agrees to Henry's terms of peace, but he adds, "I know that you must remain King--in all save

the honor of God" (Anouilh, p. 115). For Anouilh, reconciliation is the conclusion of Becket's quest for honor, since he confronts the King and takes a firm stand for the honor of God.

Although Anouilh and Eliot have different purposes in portraying the reconciliation scene, they share two details. Both dramatists use similar phrasing: Anouilh's "in all save the honor of God" is the counterpart to "I have been a loyal subject to the King./ Saving my order, I am at his command," in Eliot's drama. The second similarity is in a detail of the reconciliation: in both scenes Henry refuses to give Becket the kiss of peace, a traditional sign of reconciliation. For both dramas, the peace offers only a false security, a sense of expediency rather than true reconciliation. The reconciliation paves the way for Becket's return from exile.

The news of Thomas' return is variously received. The women of Canterbury in Murder in the Cathedral fear the return and see forebodings of evil in the events they are "compelled to witness." Thomas, they feel, does not come for their benefit, and his return can only upset their carefully established pattern of living. Even the priests misunderstand the return. The first Priest sees no difference between Henry and Thomas, both being proud stubborn men. The second Priest is uneasy, but he sees Thomas

as one who will advance the cause of the Church. Only the third Priest accepts the return as a part of the turning wheel.

There is none of the fearful indifference of the Canterbury women in Becket:

> "The native Englishmen from all the coastal towns had armed themselves to form an escort for the Archbishop . . . All along the road to Canterbury, the peasants, the artisans and the small shopkeepers came out to meet him, cheering him and escorting him . . .Poor people armed with makeshift shields and rusty lances. Riffraff. Swarms of them though, all camping around Canterbury, to protect him" (Anouilh, p. 122).

This report from a baron is given at Henry's court, and the King's rage evidences further reaction to Becket's return. The public reaction to Becket's return from exile in France is important; but his own reasons for return are more so.

The primary reason for his return from exile, as set forth by both dramatists, is Thomas' responsibility as Archbishop, and to illustrate this both Eliot and Anouilh use the symbol of the shepherd and his flock. Thomas, in Murder in the Cathedral, explains his return to the Knights:

> ". . .seven years were my people without
> My presence; seven years of misery and pain.
> Seven years a mendicant on foreign charity
> I lingered abroad; seven years is no brevity.
> I shall not get those seven years back again.
> Never again, you must make no doubt,
> Shall the sea run between the shepherd and
> his fold" (Eliot, p. 65).

In Becket, the Archbishop gives the identical reason for

his return from exile: "I am a shepherd who has remained too long away from away from his flock. I intend to go back to England. I had already made my decision . . ." (Anouilh, p. 107). Later he says to Henry, "My role is to defend my sheep. And they are my sheep" (Anouilh, p. 115). Since Becket has a responsibility to his spiritual flock, he must return to insure their protection.

Thomas is not a shepherd for the fold of Canterbury alone; he is also the Primate of all England, and he has a responsibility as the Church leader for his land. Though his office is subject to the Pope alone, there is none higher than Thomas in England. Subject only to the directions of God, Thomas believes he represents a power higher than that of Henry's realm:

> "It is not I who insult the King,
> And there is higher than I or the King.
> It is not I, Becket from Cheapside,
> It is not against me, Becket, that you strive.
> It is not Becket who pronounces doom,
> But the Law of Christ's Church, the judgement
> of Rome" (Eliot, p. 65).

Eliot gives this additional reason for Thomas' return from exile: Thomas moves in triumph to fulfill his calling as Archbishop to his place as the Primate within his own cathedral.

Before returning to England, Anouilh's Becket speaks with Louis of France:

> "I should go and have myself killed--
> if killed I must be--clad in my golden

> cope, with my miter on my head and my silver cross in my hand, among my flock in my own cathedral. That place alone befits me" (Anouilh, p. 108).

Becket, who donned the monk's habit at the outset of his clerical career to identify himself with the clerical life, now clothes himself in the robes of Archbishop; by performing this symbolic act, he now acts as an Archbishop should and returns to those dependent upon him.

In both dramas, the return from exile means much more than Becket's fulfillment of responsibilities to the Church or the adverse reactions of others. The conflict between the King and the Archbishop has not been completely resolved; Becket's return means the renewal of this secular and spiritual conflict. With death as a possible outcome in this struggle, Becket's return to England will lead to his martyrdom, a final testing of that "indiscussable truth."

Chapter IV

The Martyr Becket

On December 29, 1170, the murder of Thomas Becket ended the conflict between King and Archbishop. Though martyrdom was not unexpected by Thomas, his approach to that death in the two dramas indicates the meaning of such a death.

To illustrate the development of a Christian saint, Eliot's play concentrates heavily on Thomas' approach to death. Each of the Tempters has offered Thomas some means of escape from martyrdom, and each is rejected; however, it is the fourth and final Tempter, unknown to Thomas and unexpected by him, who poses the greatest threat to Thomas' potential sainthood. Unlike the other Tempters, who recall facets of Becket's past, the fourth Tempter delves into Thomas' mind and offers what he most desires, the glory of sainthood:

> "But think, Thomas, think of glory after death.
> When king is dead, there's another king,
> And one more king is another reign.
> King is forgotten, when another shall come:
> Saint and Martyr rule from the tomb."[1]

The penetration of this final temptation is evidenced in Thomas' laconic reply that he has thought of these things. The Tempter continues his temptation:

> "What can compare with glory of Saints
> Dwelling forever in presence of God?

> What earthly glory, of king or emperor,
> What earthly pride, that is not poverty
> Compared with richness of heavenly
> grandeur?
> Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself
> the lowest
> On earth, to be high in heaven" (Eliot, p. 39).

The thrust of this temptation takes Thomas by surprise; he is caught in the trap of his own desires.

The danger of this final temptation is subtle: Thomas can comply with events as they are, and simply allow his persecutors to carry out their predictable desires--the killing of Thomas. In easily foreseeable consequences, Thomas can predict his own death, and merely give in to the inevitable.[2] He seeks martyrdom as the final seal of his sainthood; yet self-willed martyrdom, tantamount to suicide, brings death, and it is inconceivable that such a desire is permissible to God. The fourth Tempter is urging Thomas to indulge his own will; but to elevate one's will above the will of God is to sin. Thomas cries out in anguish at his predicament:

> "Is there no way, in my soul's sickness
> Does not lead to damnation in pride?
> I well know that these temptations
> Mean present vanity and future torment.
> Can sinful pride be driven out
> Only by more sinful? Can I neither act
> nor suffer
> Without perdition?" (Eliot, p. 40).

By allowing his death, Thomas "suffers" and by indulging his own will he "acts." This last temptation, the final obstacle, is the most difficult for Thomas to surmount.

Thomas refuses the fourth Tempter, but cannot see the way to overcome the temptation. When the Tempter repeats the words Thomas had earlier said to the Chorus--"You know and do not know, what it is to act or suffer,/ You know and do not know, that action is suffering,/ And suffering action,"--Thomas has nothing to say. Grover Smith analyzes the encounter between Thomas and his counterpart, the fourth Tempter, thus:

> Becket seems to realize that unless the sufferer refrains from willing to suffer and thus from soiling his hands with his own blood, he cannot be a true martyr. After nearly blundering, Becket recognizes that . . .he himself must be passive. He must only consent to the divine will, so that he shall suffer and shall become for suffering in others the involuntary agent.[3]

This view suggests that instead of offering a temptation to Thomas, the fourth Tempter has actually warned him of his folly.

The symbol of the wheel, constant throughout Eliot's drama, is most appropriate for Thomas' dilemma. He has refused the first three Tempters, who offered only portions of the past, which he has now transcended: Thomas has refused to attempt to move the wheel. If he now succumbs to the fourth Tempter and wills his own death, he makes himself the center of the wheel. He would then most certainly commit the same sins of which the Knights are guilty,

pride and murder. Rather, Thomas must rest in the center of the wheel by submitting to the mover of the wheel, God. "Those who act, all but God, and those who suffer are inescapably on the wheel; those who consent with the will of God are as God."[4]

Anouilh's Becket also experiences the temptations of seeking martyrdom. Becket muses on this danger: "It would be simple enough. Too simple perhaps. Saintliness is a temptation too."[5] For Anouilh's Becket, the temptation to seek martyrdom is overshadowed by the temptation to remain in security. Becket's greatest concern is to find and fulfill Becket's duty:

> "I shall take up the miter and the golden cope again, and the great silver cross, and I shall go back and fight in the place and with the weapons it has pleased You to give me . . .I shall go back to my place, humbly, and let the world accuse me of pride, so that I may do what I believe is my life's work" (Anouilh, p. 105).

Becket, in this militant declaration, offers no similarities to Eliot's paralyzed Thomas. The only similarity in the final approach to martyrdom is that both Anouilh's and Eliot's Beckets are faced with the temptation of allowing events to take their courses: Anouilh's Becket can remain in the secure exile in France; Eliot's Becket can will his martyrdom to insure his glory.

In <u>Murder in the Cathedral</u>, the appeal of the fourth

Tempter undergoes a subtle change when he urges Thomas to think of the public acclaim and worship that will come to him with the crown of martyrdom. It is the women of Canterbury who symbolize the whole public in Eliot's drama, and in their changing attitudes Eliot demonstrates the appeal of becoming a saint. Initially, the Chorus fears Thomas' return, crying for him to go back to France, exile, and safety: they fear for his welfare, but much more they fear the disturbance of their mundane lives. But the Chorus gradually grows in its comprehension of Thomas' need to return, until, at the confrontation of Thomas and the fourth Tempter, it sees him as the champion of eternal souls. This growing public awareness gives strength to the Tempter's appeal that Thomas think of his public image.

Thomas is stalemated in the conflict of his own desire for martyrdom; martyrdom is not wrong, but his reasons for seeking it are. F. O. Matthiessen thus analyzes Thomas' most serious temptation: "Eliot dramatizes Becket's chief peril, the temptation of the proud mind to become so confident in its wisdom that it seeks--and takes for granted--a martyr's crown as its reward."[6] Though Thomas' death is determined both by the wheel of fate and the will of God, his own attitude determines whether his death will be judged as suicide or martyrdom.

The necessary purification of Thomas' will is not

dramatized. After a painful interval in which the Tempters mock and the Chorus pleads, Thomas overcomes this final temptation:

> "Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain:
> Temptation shall not come in this kind again.
> The last temptation is the greatest treason:
> To do the right deed for the wrong reason" (Eliot, p. 44).

Thomas is aided in his decision by his awareness of the needs of the women of Canterbury, those spiritually dependent upon him. The women realize Thomas' potential failure of faith, and, in a frenzied speech, plead with him to overcome the temptation for their sake:

> "God is leaving us, God is leaving us, more
> pang, more pain than birth or death.
> Sweet and cloying through the dark air
> Falls the stifling scent of despair;
> The forms take shape in the dark air:
> Puss-purr of leopard, footfall of padding
> bear,
> Palm-pat of nodding ape, square hyaena waiting
> For laughter, laughter, laughter. The Lords
> of Hell are here.
> They curl round you, lie at your feet, swing
> and wing through the dark air.
> O Thomas Archbishop, save us, save us, save
> yourself that we may be saved;
> Destroy yourself and we are de-
> stroyed" (Eliot, p. 44).

The images of this speech recall the bestial and the primitive that can return man to the chaos of a life without meaning. The Chorus senses the danger confronting Thomas, but it does not know the way to overcome it. In the cry to "save yourself" these women are urging Thomas to withdraw himself from bodily harm: they are also dimly aware that if Thomas

fails to regain his faith, their hope of salvation is lost.

Anouilh uses the public acclaim of Becket to underline the conflict between the King and the Archbishop. Henry has either ordered or influenced his court to shun Becket, but the King's plans are erased by the welcome Becket receives on his return to England. Henry's courtiers describe the native Englishmen grouped along the coast to insure safe conduct for the Archbishop:

> "All along the road to Canterbury, the peasants, the artisans and the small shopkeepers came out to meet him, cheering him and escorting him from village to village . . .Poor people armed with makeshift shields and rusty lances. Riffraff. Swarms of them though, all camping around Canterbury, to protect him" (Anouilh, p. 122).

The people, a powerful faction to be reckoned with, claim Becket as a folk-hero, their public champion.

After Becket's death, these same riffraff peasants, who have so identified with Becket that they give their political allegiance only to him, become important to Henry. Henry's kingdom is divided and he needs all the political support he can muster. Becket, which opened with Henry's penance at Canterbury, concludes with the disclosure of the reason for Henry's penance: "Sire, the operation has been successful! The Saxon mob is yelling with enthusiasm outside the cathedral, acclaiming your Majesty's name in the same breath as Becket's! If the Saxons are on our side

now . . ." (Anouilh, p. 128). Henry has used Becket's death for his own political advantage to win the support of the Saxon population.

In both plays, Becket's reasons for facing martyrdom extend beyond a simple concern for public acclaim; his personal salvation is another outcome of his death. In Murder in the Cathedral, Thomas' death accomplishes his own salvation and sets an example for all his spiritual dependents; however, in Becket, the salvation of Becket is presumably accomplished without setting an example for others. The difference in these two approaches to the meaning of Becket's death illustrates the difference in Eliot's and Anouilh's dramatic purposes: Eliot intends to write a Christian drama; Anouilh, an existential treatise.

Anouilh's approach, in the tradition of the French existential school, is explained by Jacques Guichardnaud:

> Becket never for a moment gives a thought to what he considers a duty: it is an imperative which is given without justification and which places him beyond any psychological or political vision. Such an attitude is doubtless one solution to the problem of life which is unlivable--but a desperate one. For since life is necessarily and gradually corroded by the cancer of practical compromises and false, dehumanizing idealism, choosing "absurd" purity is actually choosing against life, killing oneself or having oneself killed in the name of that No which is both the honor of man and his annihilation.[7]

Becket is conscious of his situation, and his salvation comes through his ability to say No to life. The realization of the universal absurdity of life and the need for self-imposed meaning is not instantaneous with Becket. It is, rather, the drawn-out search for an absolute meaning in life that gives Anouilh's drama its structure. Becket's search for an absolute is the major consideration of the drama.

Although Becket clearly doubts the existence of any moral order in the universe, he longs for an ethical code with the self-contained purity and completeness of an art object. This longing explains his need to label everything in order to give the universe order. As Henry says, what looks like morality in Becket is merely esthetics. Only in death does he find his ideal; like Gwendolen, Becket chooses to die when all freedom to choose another course is denied him. Becket's death, therefore, is absolutely essential for his own salvation. To live and submit to a degrading life is to accept compromise. Anouilh's Becket is another illustration of human alienation from a sterile universe: to give credibility to any of his accomplishments, Becket must be willing to die. Death becomes the final self-willed act which gives witness to and seals a man's life. Thus, in his self-made universe, Becket is an isolated man, and his death is personal.[8]

In Becket, one character benefits from the example of Becket's death--the young Saxon monk. This lad is the only person present at Becket's preparation for death; the Archbishop has decided to clothe himself in all the splendor of his official robes. The young monk, in his haste to aid Becket, fumbles clumsily with the laces of the vestments, and Becket suggests they be left undone. The boy, echoing Becket's own philosophy, answers: "If it's worth doing it's worth doing well" (Anouilh, p. 124). This assertion indicates the influence Becket has on the young monk, an influence that prompts the boy to emulate Becket's choice for death. Unafraid, the lad makes his decision:

> "All I want is the chance to strike a few blows first; so I shan't have done nothing but receive them all my life. If I can kill one Norman first--just one, I don't want much--one for one, that will seem fair and right enough to me" (Anouilh, p. 125).

The boy has learned to resist compromise with a degrading life and to die; but the choice is his own and his salvation is self-wrought, as is Becket's.

The hour of death in Anouilh's drama emphasizes the confused meaning of Becket's death. Having chosen the cathedral as the testing ground, Becket refuses to allow his priests to barricade the building: "It is time for Vespers, William. Does one close the choir gates during Vespers? I never heard of such a thing . . .Everything

must be the way it should be" (Anouilh, p. 126). Even in these last moments, Becket reaffirms the necessity of doing the proper thing. With the cathedral unguarded and open, the four Barons enter; the young Saxon monk leaps forward to attack his one Norman, but he is struck down before he can deliver a blow. The whole of Becket's search for an absolute meaning is summarized in his response to the monk's death: "Oh how difficult You make it all! And how heavy Your honor is to bear!" (Anouilh, p. 127). In an existential sense, Becket has searched alone for meaning; God has remained aloof throughout Becket's quest. Since only the actions of his own life provide any salvation for him, Becket's death, as the strongest action of his life, insures his own salvation from the corroding absurdity of life.

Henry's actions following Becket's death further isolate the effect the Archbishop may have had as an example. The play closes ironically: all Becket's seeking for honor, the honor of God, is completely erased by Henry. Henry submitted to flagellation only to gain public support; the play ends with the gain of that support. Henry's use of Becket's honor and the honor of God for his own political expediency undercuts the tragedy of Becket. It is Henry who emerges triumphant:

> "The honor of God, gentlemen, is a very good thing, and taken all in all,

> one gains by having it on one's side. Thomas Becket, who was our friend, used to say so. England will owe her ultimate victory over chaos to him, and it is our wish that, henceforward, he should be honored and prayed to in this Kingdom as a saint" (Anouilh, p. 128).

This speech casts irony on the whole drama, since Becket's martyrdom proves to be useful, not as an example of salvation, but as a political tool in the hands of King Henry. The irony is further enhanced by the fact that it is Henry and not the Pope who "canonizes" Becket.

Because T. S. Eliot is writing a Christian drama which disregards the dramatic terms of "tragedy" and "comedy," he does not present Thomas' death as tragic. Eliot is interested in the inner workings that produce a saint and martyr. Unlike Anouilh's Becket, Eliot's Becket does not live in an isolation which requires him to make his own way; he lives in a Christian universe where things are determined and designed by a Divine Will. The means for his salvation comes through his search for and identification with this will.

Like the Becket portrayed by Anouilh, Eliot's Becket is involved in a quest for an absolute; his concern is not with "honor" but with "peace." With significant recurrence, Eliot employs "peace" to signal the various stages of the approach to martyrdom. The first stage involves Becket's imminent return to England and the concern of the first

Priest, who fears war as an alternative to peace. Thomas' first word and greeting is "peace," not as the opposite of war, but as an inward state of calm.

The most extended consideration of "peace" occurs in the first prose interlude of the verse drama, the Christmas sermon. The sermon text centers on peace: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." In a sense, the sermon is a soliloquy which allows Thomas to expose the workings of his mind as he faces martyrdom: it affords Eliot opportunity to reveal his theories by way of Thomas. By preparing his listeners for events to come with a meditation on peace, Thomas turns to a consideration of martyrdom:

> "A Christian martyrdom is never an accident, for Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of a man's will to become a Saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become a ruler of men. A martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them; to bring them back to His ways. It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr" (Eliot, p. 49).

Thomas here rationalizes his triumph over the fourth Tempter; Eliot appears to be manipulating Thomas into becoming a proper example of Christian martyrdom.

Helen Gardner aptly explains the uneasy feeling evoked

in an audience by Thomas' spiritual triumph:

> There is a taint of professionalism about his [Thomas'] sanctity; the note of complacency is always creeping into his self-conscious presentation of himself. . . .The difficulty lies in the nature of dramatic presentation. . . .Mr. Eliot has conceived his hero as a superior person. The nature of his superiority can be expounded dramatically only by himself, for the play assumes a gulf between the saint and the ordinary man. Inevitably in the expounding the protagonist appears superior in the pejorative sense.[9]

This self-revelation of sanctity appears too near spiritual self-culture in Thomas: he seems more Gnostic than Christian.

As the final confrontation with the four knights approaches, Thomas gives commands to the priests within the cathedral: "Peace! Be quiet! remember where you are, and what is happening;/ No life here is sought for but mine,/ And I am not in danger; only near to death" (Eliot, p. 70). He does not again refer to peace, apparently having reconciled himself to his fate. Thomas' concerns now turn to his followers, and, unlike Anouilh's Becket, he dies as much for them as for himself: "Go to vespers, remember me at your prayers./ They shall find the shepherd here; the flock shall be spared" (Eliot, p. 70). Thomas declares that his death is a deliberate emulation of Christ's death: ...

"A Christian, saved by the blood of Christ,
Ready to suffer with my blood.
This is the sign of the Church always,
The sign of blood. Blood for blood.
His blood given to buy my life,
My blood given to pay for His death,
My death for His death" (Eliot, p. 75).

The sainthood of Thomas will be final when the process is continued, and the Chorus realizes the example set by the Archbishop is to be copied.

Thomas' death, in Murder in the Cathedral, begins to assume some of the irony cast on Becket's death in Becket. Having brutally murdered Thomas, the four Knights step forward to address the audience, and though they do not "use" Becket as Henry did, they slander his martyrdom. They justify their actions, explaining that things could not have proceeded any other way: their final, shocking consensus is that the Archbishop was guilty of suicide, having failed to prevent his death. But Thomas, forewarned of this danger by the fourth Tempter, had humbled his will and had submitted to the turning of the wheel. Thomas had so submerged himself in a Divine will that his actions result from that will, not from his self-will. The Knights cannot escape their sin: in their pride, they deny their guilt in the murder and condemn themselves.

Murder in the Cathedral does not conclude on the political note of the Knights' speeches: it returns to the spiritual realm for a consideration of the impact of

of Thomas' death. Through all the events leading to Thomas' martyrdom, the Chorus stands as witness, slow to perceive the meaning of these events. To the accompaniment of the Dies Irae, the women testify to the loss of sense in such a death:

> "Numb the hand and dry the eyelid,
> Still the horror, but more horror
> Than when tearing in the belly . . .
> The agents of hell disappear, the human,
> they shrink and dissolve
> Into dust on the wind, forgotten, unmemorable;
> only is here
> The white flat face of Death, God's silent
> servant,
> And behind the face of Death the Judgement
> And behind the Judgement the Void, more
> horrid that active shapes of hell;
> Emptiness, absence, separation from
> God" (Eliot, p. 71).

Their awareness does not increase immediately after Thomas is martyred; they feel in the "rain of blood" only defilement, not promise of new life. Only with the guidance of the Priests does realization of the full import of Thomas' death grow in the Chorus: the Chorus is suddenly aware that Thomas joins the number of interceding saints. The women of Canterbury have not yet reached the spiritual superiority of Thomas, but they now acknowledge his death as efficacious for them. Eliot has brought the structure of the Chorus' speeches full circle from the frenzied opening pleas to the traditional measured prayers that conclude the drama; in this progression the proper effect of Thomas' death is seen.

The differences in the dramatic portraits of Becket projected by T. S. Eliot and Jean Anouilh account for the two divergent approaches to death. Eliot projects Becket as a saint by his own actions; Anouilh's Becket becomes a saint through a royal decree. Eliot postulates a Christian universe where events are predetermined by the design of God, where moral evil rather than death constitutes tragedy. Eliot's Becket must learn to overcome his self-will, which implies rebellion, to lose it in the Divine will; death comes to him by submission to that Divine plan. Anouilh has conceived his Becket as a man isolated in a hostile universe; Becket must make his way through adverse circumstances to prove himself through a self-willed death.

Chapter V

Evaluation

What remains to be considered in this study is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the two dramas. By now, two primary differences have emerged: the dramatic styles of Eliot and Anouilh are vastly different; and the stories told seem to deal with two men, not a single historical character, Thomas Becket.

The difference in dramatic styles partially stems from Eliot's use of verse and Anouilh's use of prose. Eliot, interested in the historical importance of Becket, was acutely aware of the need to choose a dramatic style suitable to his treatment of the subject:

> For one thing, the problem of language which that play /Murder in the Cathedral/ had presented to me was a special problem. . . .the vocabulary and style could not be exactly those of modern conversation . . .because I had to take my audience back to an historical event; and they could not afford to be archaic . . . because I wanted to bring home to the audience the contemporary relevance of the situation. The style therefore had to be neutral, committed neither to the present nor to the past.[1]

Dramatic verse fulfilled these qualifications for Eliot. It is important that Eliot, confident of an audience that shared his Christian philosophies, could expect that same audience to be receptive to a verse drama. Verse suggested

the necessary tone needed to concentrate on the serious subject of martyrdom; furthermore, it readily molded to the religious language used.

Anouilh's use of prose, the common contemporary dramatic vehicle, can be attributed to his contemporary interests: as he said in the introduction to his play, in Becket he "found a man," not a saint. Jacques Guichardnaud adds to the suggestion that Anouilh's true intent in writing Becket is to create a contemporary drama: "On one level the historical drama is a pretext for very contemporary allusions, sordid family scenes, and denunciations of political corruption and disenchantment."[2] The contemporary situation interested Anouilh to the extent that the names of the characters in the drama could be changed but the conflict between the characters would remain the same. Prose is the most natural vehicle for the modern import of Anouilh's play, and it is highly suitable for the great amount of dialogue--only Becket is allowed the luxury of an extended soliloquy.

The reasons for selecting prose or poetry extend beyond a simple choice of either style. In the two plays, poetry has the distinct advantage over prose--regardless of the language difference between the two plays--because poetry links form and meaning. In poetry, organic form grows out of the meaning and molds the shape of the work.

Surface form is imposed on prose to shape it; thus, there is little connection between form and meaning in prose. Further variance can be seen by contrasting the qualities of poetry and prose: poetry is primarily imaginative, prose expository; poetry creates something, prose talks about something; poetry deals with specifics, prose with generalities. No amount of condensation in prose can achieve the succinctness of poetry.

Eliot's verse becomes a clear asset to the strength of his drama. Despite Eliot's pronouncement that the verse afforded his drama only "negative merit," Sean Lucy suggests that the verse is the greatest merit of the play:

> It is the power of the dramatic verse that gives the play its unique quality of unity and intensity. The language is the verse, which is the action, which is the theme, which is the atmosphere, which is the meaning; in other words we have here an impressive realisation of the dramatic potentials which Eliot, in his critical works, has claimed for verse.[3]

In Murder in the Cathedral, Eliot may not have gained any clue for later use of verse in another drama, and this lack of future worth caused him to speak of "negative merit" of that play; but he clearly achieved an admirably singular quality through his dramatic verse.

The strength of Anouilh's play lies in the projection of the character Becket, not in his speeches. Anouilh necessarily supplements the prose of his play with actions,

props, and stage directions. For Anouilh, prose is neither an asset nor a liablity to his play; unlike Eliot's verse which <u>is</u> his play, Anouilh's prose is only one part of his play. The most outstanding illustration of this principle is the means by which the two dramatists portray the secular Becket. Eliot confines his portrayal to several speeches of the first three Tempters. Using close-packed imagery, Eliot recalls all the powerful appeal of Becket's life prior to his becoming Archbishop. To achieve the same effect, Anouilh utilizes several scenes and various characters: the hunting scene with Henry shows Becket in pursuit of pleasure; Gwendolen, as Becket's mistress, portrays an element of human affection; four barons in France discuss Becket's battle prowess. The outcome of Anouilh's presentation detracts from a single impression of Becket's secular life.

Eliot does not confine the language of his drama to verse; twice he interrupts his play with a prose interlude. The interludes are not accidental, as Eliot explains:

> . . .A mixture of prose and verse in the same play is generally to be avoided; each transition makes the auditor aware, with a jolt, of the medium. It is, we may say, justifiable when the author wishes to produce this jolt: when, that is, he wishes to transport the audience violently from one plane of reality to another.[4]

Twice, Eliot wished to transport his audience to another realm of reality in <u>Murder in the Cathedral</u>. The first

prose interlude is the Christmas Day sermon. Appropriately, Eliot places the sermon at the conclusion of the first part of the drama, following the return of Thomas and the subsequent temptation by the four Tempters. The sermon acts as a soliloquy for Becket to reassure the audience of his own peace of mind in facing the death to come in the second part of the drama.

The second prose interruption occurs when the four Knights, turning from the murder of Becket, address the audience to justify their action. D. E. Jones explains the effect on the audience of this second prose interlude:

> With and through the Chorus, we of the audience are invited to participate in the celebration of the act of martyrdom and to accept the sacrifice of Thomas as made in our behalf. Before we can do this, however, we, like Thomas, must undergo temptation, in our case the temptation to deny the efficacy of his sacrifice and its relevance to us. Stepping out of their twelfth-century setting, the Knights seek by every means . . .to make us admit the reasonableness of their action and to acknowledge that we are involved in it, since we have benefited from it,[5]

Eliot's second prose passage, then, is a direct appeal to the audience: he shocks them into involvement with an awareness that Thomas' death is relevant to the present. Then, by the return to verse with the Priests, Eliot gently leads his audience back to the consideration that Thomas' suffering, not the Knights' action, is important.

Eliot certainly uses his verse with more dramatic

imagination than Anouilh can his prose. To strip the consideration of a drama to one moment in a man's life is a most daring move on Eliot's part; yet he succeeds through the impact of his verse. Eliot is successful in exposing the inner turmoil of Becket approaching martyrdom. Anouilh's drama is not without excitement; but any excitement in his prose is pallid in contrast to Eliot's superb poetry. The action of Becket's life, as seen by Anouilh, is exciting; but the action is too general. Anouilh's play has no single impact, with the possible exception of Becket's achievement of "honor"; but even that achievement is undercut at the end of the play by an expedient Henry, who uses Becket's "honor" for his own gain.

A second major difference between Eliot's and Anouilh's plays is the degree of adherence to historical fact. Eliot makes no alterations in the biography of Becket; but he omits a great amount of biographical material--presumably an audience at a Canterbury Festival would know who Thomas Becket was. The obvious cause of Eliot's selectivity is his concentration on Becket's martyrdom; he ignores the entire life of Becket, save one day. So limited a view of Becket causes the one major weakness of Eliot's drama--a failure to portray Becket as a person. Somehow Becket

is less an individual than an idea. From the moment of his inception, Becket is predictable; however, the Chorus' growth of awareness helps to compensate for a lack of growth in Becket. The drama deals more with Becket's final purification of motives and subsequent martyrdom than it does with his growing awareness of the meaning of martyrdom. That growth is left to the audience.

It is difficult to see in Eliot's drama a pattern for the twentieth century; yet it is precisely such a pattern Eliot wished to communicate to the 1935 Canterbury Festival. Eliot was more successful in the dramatic impact of his use of Becket's history than in the communication of the relevance and importance of martyrdom for the twentieth century.

In Becket, not only does Anouilh use more biographical details than Eliot but also he adds and alters more facts of Becket's life. The outstanding addition on Anouilh's part is Becket's mistress, Gwendolen. Since all biographers agree that Becket took a chastity vow in his early youth, there is no historical basis for such a mistress, not even in Thierry's erroneous account. In Anouilh's play, Gwendolen serves as another example of a member of a defeated group of people; she is a captured Welsh girl, and Becket is a member of the vanquished Saxons. In a limited sense, Gwendolen's suicide

serves as an example of what must be done to gain personal honor. She also helps to extend Anouilh's view that an individual's life gains meaning in an isolated universe through self-determination; Gwendolen finds meaning in life only by her own action as, eventually, Becket must do. By violating historical fact in adding Gwendolen, Anouilh gives depth to his portrait of the isolated Becket: isolation is universal and confronts all the characters of the drama.

Anouilh includes two alterations of biographical fact: he changes Edward Grim into a restless Saxon monk who seeks revenge on all Normans; the Pope is transformed from a realist into a crafty hypocrite. Both these alterations serve to extend Anouilh's portrayal of Becket. The Saxon monk becomes a mirror image of Becket's own shame in being a Saxon: he also reaffirms Anouilh's view that salvation is highly personal, and possible only through self-willed withdrawal from life. The Pope offers an example of one who would compromise with the situation and, thereby, lose his honor, an example for Becket of how not to be.

Anouilh's additions and alterations to Becket's biography are justifiable, particularly considering the inaccurate source of the facts. Anouilh, impressed by the humanity of Becket, made no attempt to verify the truth of

Thierry's account; even when he learned of Thierry's inaccuracy, he declined to alter his drama. This conscious deviation from history indicates that Anouilh had not intended to write a history play. But alteration of history did not necessarily improve the story for Anouilh's drama. Some portions of the play violate the structural principle of the drama, which begins with Henry's flashback. Clearly, any soliloquy by Becket--there are two--would be impossible for Henry to overhear. Occasionally the additions, such as Henry's manipulation of Becket's death for his own political gain, obscure the meaning of the drama.

By applying the initially suggested controlling requirements for drama based on history to the two plays, it is clear that Eliot succeeds where Anouilh fails. The historical dramatist must first simplify history to center on the one important issue to be conveyed through his drama. Eliot reduces Becket's life to a single day and, thereby, concentrates on the making of a Christian saint and martyr. Anouilh, spanning approximately twenty years of Becket's life, fails to simplify history. His drama divides into episodes which prevent the emergence of any central issue: even "Becket's honor" is varied and, finally, undercut by Henry's political stratagems.

Second, the historical dramatist has a responsibil-

ity not to distort the history he chooses as the basis for his drama. Eliot distorts nothing. Anouilh, as previously noted, distorts and adds to the history of Becket. As Christopher Fry suggested of the dramatist who would distort history, ". . .let him invent his characters, let him go to Ruritania for his history."[6]

Finally, the historical dramatist must shape the history he uses. Through his singular conception of Becket and through the general religious view of the drama, Eliot indubitably shapes history. Anouilh negatively shapes history; he imposes his philosophies on a man who did not live by such philosophies. Rather than shape, Anouilh has distorted Becket's story so that it becomes Anouilh's story. He may have written a good drama, but it is not an historical drama.

Eliot achieved his purpose, through dramatic verse and careful selection of biographical details, in portraying a Christian saint and martyr. Both dramatists had to deal with the climax of Becket's life, his death: Eliot is unquestionably more successful in his treatment of that death; Anouilh succumbed to the appeal of Becket's life and ignored the import of his death. Becket himself accomplished more through his death than he ever could have achieved in life. Inevitably, it is as a martyr that Thomas Becket will be remembered.

Footnotes

Chapter I

[1]Richard Winston, Thomas Becket (New York, 1967), p. 6. Mr. Winston's recent biography is the first full reexamination of Becket's life in almost a hundred years. He sifts fact from fancy: his historical methods are excellent, using as he does numerous primary sources as the basis for much of the biography. Consequently, this work provides much of the basis for my summary of Thomas Becket's life.

[2]Winston, p. 33.

[3]Ibid., p. 52.

[4]Ibid., pp. 71-72.

[5]George Burton Adams and H. Morse Stephens, Select Documents of English Constitutional History (New York, 1910), pp. 11-14.

[6]Amy Kelly, Eleanor of Aquitaine (Cambridge, 1950), p. 128.

[7]Winston, p. 289.

[8]Ibid., p. 283.

[9]Ibid., p. 315.

[10]Ibid., p. 346.

[11]Ibid., p. 366

[12]Christopher Fry, "Preface," Curtmantle (New York, 1961), pp. vii-viii.

[13]Philip Headings, T. S. Eliot (New York, 1964), p. 107.

[14]Carol H. Smith, T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice (Princeton, 1963), p. 80.

[15]T. S. Eliot, "Poetry and Drama," On Poetry and Poets (New York, 1957), p. 86.

[16]Jean Anouilh, "Introduction," Becket, trans. Lucienne Hill (New York, 1960), p. v.

[17]Augustin Thierry, History of the Conquest of England, trans. William Hazlitt (London, 1891), pp. 54-111.

[18]Anouilh, "Introduction," Becket, p. v.

[19]Ibid., p. viii.

Chapter II

[1]Emil Roy, "The Becket Plays: Eliot, Fry and Anouilh," Modern Drama, VIII (1965-1966), p. 268.

[2]Jean Anouilh, Becket, trans. Lucienne Hill (New York, 1960), p. 14. Subsequent references to this work will be included parenthetically within the text.

[3]Jesse Gatlin, "Becket and Honor: A Trim Reckoning," Modern Drama, VIII (1965-1966), 277-283.

[4]This is the scene which Henry recalls when he covets and requests the beautiful Gwendolen as the return favor from Becket. At that time, Henry defeats Becket's noble effort to rescue the Saxon girl by sending soldiers to drag her from the hut, and he then presents the girl to Becket.

[5]T. S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral (New York, 1935), p. 24. Subsequent references to this work will be included parenthetically within the text.

[6]Gatlin, p. 279.

[7]Jacques Guichardnaud, Modern French Theatre: From Giraudoux to Beckett (New Haven, 1961), p. 114.

[8]Guichardnaud, p. 122.

[9]Ibid., p. 124.

[10]Francis Fergusson, The Idea of a Theatre (Princeton, 1949), p. 214.

[11]Helen Gardner, The Art of T. S. Eliot (New York, 1959), p. 134.

Chapter III

[1]Jean Anouilh, Becket (New York, 1960), p. 57. Subsequent references to this work will be included parenthetically within the text.

[2]Modern French Theatre: From Giraudoux to Beckett (New Haven, 1961), p. 127.

[3]T. S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral (New York, 1935), p. 31. Subsequent references to this work will be included parenthetically within the text.

[4]John Harvey, Anouilh: A Study in Theatrics (New Haven, 1964), p. 64.

[5]John Harvey approaches the drama on this basis, giving equal attention to Henry and Becket. I feel this theory fragments the drama and leaves Anouilh's obvious concentration on Becket unexplained.

Chapter IV

[1]T. S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral (New York, 1935), pp. 37-38. Subsequent references to this work will be included within the text.

[2]Hugh Kenner, The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot (New York, 1959), pp. 277-279.

[3]Grover Smith, T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays (Chicago, 1959), p. 188.

[4]Ibid., p. 189.

[5]Jean Anouilh, Becket (New York, 1960), p. 103. Subsequent references to this work will be included within the text.

[6]F. O. Matthiessen, The Achievement of T. S. Eliot (New York, 1958), p. 164.

[7]Jacques Guichardnaud, Modern French Theatre: From Giraudoux to Genet (New Haven, 1967), p. 129.

[8]Emil Roy, "The Becket Plays: Eliot, Fry and Anouilh," Modern Drama, VIII (1965-1966), pp. 268-271.

[9]Helen Gardner, The Art of T. S. Eliot (New York, 1950), pp. 135-136.

Chapter V

[1]T. S. Eliot, "Poetry and Drama," On Poetry and Poets (New York, 1957), pp. 84-85.

[2]Jacques Guichardnaud, Modern French Theatre: From Giraudoux to Genet (New Haven, 1967), p. 128.

[3]Sean Lucy, T. S. Eliot and the Idea of Tradition (London, 1960), p. 187.

[4]Eliot, "Poetry and Drama," p. 77.

[5]D. E. Jones, The Plays of T. S. Eliot (Toronto, 1960), p. 62.

[6]Christopher Fry, "Preface," Curtmantle (New York, 1961), p. vii.

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VITA

Name: Donna Faye (Climenhaga) Wenger

Place of birth: Tulare, California

Date of birth: February 13, 1945

Parents: David E. Climenhaga

Dorcas M. (Slagenweit) Climenhaga

Spouse: Carlin L. Wenger

Institutions attended: Messiah College (1962-1966)

Degree: A. B., Messiah College, 1966

Professional experience: Instructor in English

Messiah College 1967-

Publications: Poetry published in Pensées, a publication of the Arts and Letters Club of Messiah College, 1969.